

COMMERCIAL

Interior design

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THE FIRM

MEET THE TEAM BEHIND THE CID AWARD-WINNING
INTERIOR DESIGN COMPANY PERKINS + WILL

Oriental hotel with a modern twist

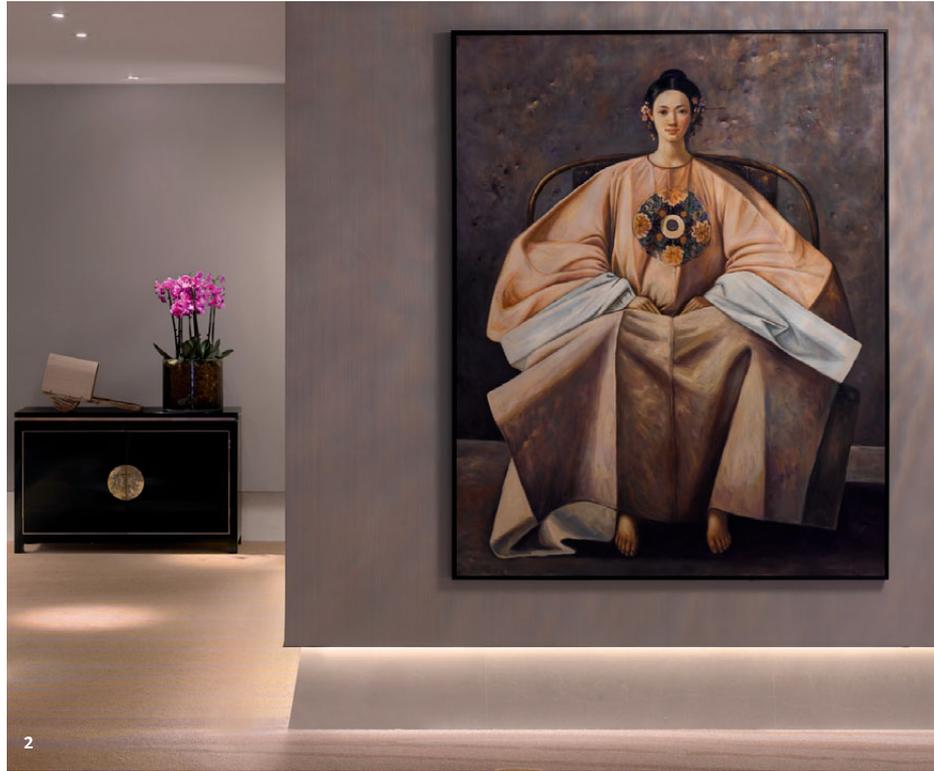
HBA DUBAI DESIGN TEAM
MERGES CONTEMPORARY
ORIENTAL CULTURE INTO
THE FIRST CHINESE
STYLE FIVE-STAR HOTEL
IN BRUSSELS



CASE STUDY

Tangla Brussels is an 187-key hotel located in the economic hub of Brussels, Belgium with proximity to the China Embassy and international airport. It is the first five-star property to be built outside of China for Tangla Hotels and Resorts, the international hotel management arm of HNA's Hospitality Group based out of Hong Kong.

- 1 Tangla Brussels.
 - 2 The artwork is showcased in a series of 22 lacquered frames pieced together like a modern puzzle.
 - 3 Several private dining rooms are in keeping with the Chinese tradition of privacy and prestige.
- It was the vision of Belgian native, David T'Kint, to bring the ornamented beauty of Chinese culture and folklore to Belgium. The HBA Dubai-based partner, who previously lived in Shanghai and Singapore, was excited by the opportunity of translating his vision of contemporary Chinese culture into a European-based hotel. The key team members lead by T'Kint, included art consultant Malorie Fourrier and interior designers Leo Wang and Shawna McFee.
- "A contemporary showcase of Chinese culture is what was asked from





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4 Wall art and sculptures are placed throughout the reception area.

5 David T'Kint.

6 Dark wooden floors and lowered ceilings supported by textured wooden beams set the tone for the Chinese restaurant.

myself and HBA when first meeting the owner of HNA Hospitality Group. With Tangla Brussels being the company's first property outside of China, the pressure to be successful was big," explains T'Kint.

"Tangla" is originated from the legend of the Tanggula, a paradise nestled in the tranquil Qingzhang highlands blessed by the patron saint of the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains.

"We were able to source everything in China and give the 'made in China' statement a positive and luxurious undertone. Hainan Airlines is one of HNA's businesses and the only Chi-

“While being overall contemporary, there are subtle references to Chinese culture in many features such as doors, handles, wall panels, carpet design and bookshelves”

nese airline with a Skytrax Five-Star rating, meaning HNA owns and operates high-end, luxury properties and services as part of its brand identity and the hotel needed to follow suit," he says.

Upon entering the hotel guests are greeted by a pair of stylised Chinese horses, symbols of strength and no-

bility, the first introduction to the visual journey between East and West. As the guests enter into the double volume space of the lobby, they are embraced by deconstructed Chinese characters that have realigned themselves into a decorative screen with radiant colour of blue flowing behind, reminiscent of three rivers. The back

CASE STUDY



wall is adorned from floor to ceiling with custom artwork by Chinese native Yang Fei depicting the natural beauty of the Tanggula Mountains. The artwork is showcased in a series of 22 lacquered frames pieced together like a modern puzzle, a twist on the traditional Chinese window.

Transitioning from polished marble floors on to vibrant carpets leads the guest into an atmospheric celebration of Chinese Tea House traditions. The lobby lounge embraces these traditions by infusing a collection of tea culture experiences into one space. A central bar with cantilevering counters is flushed with natural daylight from the skylight above spilling on to colourful carpets inspired by tea plantations found in China's landscape. A variety of traditional and contemporary Chinese related tea accessories are displayed throughout the space with a focal oversized teapot as the main greeting.

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Dark wooden floors and lowered ceilings supported by textured wooden beams set the tone for the Chinese restaurant. Rich saturated orange silk wall coverings dress the walls where rethought Chinese millwork details have not. Rhythm is created in the restaurant by a series of screens constructed of black metal and glass insets, in homage to Chinese decorative furniture. Carpet designs symbolising royalty and strength are woven with the characteristics of stylised dragons. Several



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With a strong residential look and feel, the Presidential and Duplex suites incorporate deeper roots into the Orient style.

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The guest bathroom vanity recalls a contemporary variation of classic Chinese furniture.

private dining rooms are in keeping with the Chinese tradition of privacy and prestige.

Auspicious clouds are an essential notion in Chinese culture and are the symbol of blessing and good luck, hence their importance within the event spaces and ballroom. The carpets throughout these areas are a collection of these "lucky" clouds continually changing shape and tone.

The ballroom chandelier is an even more glamorous depiction, individual crystals forming a silhouetted composition of their various forms.

A collection of Chinese artefacts reinterpreted or used in their original form are placed around the space as freestanding sculptures or wall art continuing guests on their journey to the East.

The small guestroom footprint lead the design team towards a creative approach to meeting the five-star hospitality standard of luxury and spaciousness. Incorporating concealed storage, customising the headboards and utilising technology in the TV and desk area allowed the standard rooms to accommodate the functions required for comfort.

The essence of the Tanggula Mountains is woven into the guestrooms and suites through subtle impressions making it the heart of the hotel.

The guest bathroom vanity recalls a contemporary variant of classic Chinese furniture. The plum blossom, China's national flower, a symbol of resilience and perseverance is the feature of the guestroom carpets in rich neutral tones of blue and green

inspired by the mountains landscape.

The Presidential and Duplex suites incorporate deeper roots into the Orient style.

“The presidential suite and duplex suite are probably the areas which stand out the most to me,” says T’Kint. “Both suites have their own identities: the presidential suite is warmer, and the duplex is slightly more contemporary. These spaces are very residential and feel like a large Chinese studio rather than a hotel suite.”

Complementing the millwork, screens and furniture is the artwork collection. Provocative, engaging, and sometimes quirky selections have been intentionally infused into the design along with striking pops of colours and scale. To remain exclusively Chinese, all artisans and craftsmen were sourced locally in China.

He adds: “Wall art, sculpture and objects are placed throughout the suites like one would have in the home. While being overall contemporary, there are subtle references

to Chinese culture in many features such as doors, handles, wall panels, AC grills patterns, carpet design and bookshelves. Finally, the atmosphere is relaxing and very much in line with the brand identity, which draws inspiration from the Tanggula Mountains.”

One of the reasons HBA was initially selected to design the hotel was because T’Kint lived in China years ago and therefore possess a certain level of understanding of how to approach the business of design in the country. Commenting on the challenges while working on this project he adds: “We found that when other companies involved in the project, had cultural misunderstandings with ownership, we would often end up in the middle of it.

“Another challenge was for the local contractors and suppliers to understand the expected level of sophistication we were asking for in products and services, which are not that unusual in Asia, however, unexpected in Europe.”



THE WINNING PROJECT

HBA Dubai won CID’s International Project of the Year Award for its work on Tangla Hotel Brussels. The winning project was chosen for its unusual design and the judging panel praised the way HBA Dubai utilised the ornamental beauty of contemporary Chinese culture and folklore and brought it to life in a Europe-based hotel.

T’Kint comments: “The essence of what we do lies in how we design elements, which are a very subtle interpretation of the design narrative, not an obvious use of existing culture, architecture and design. Although it can be challenging, this is the part of my job that I particularly enjoy – every project is different, we do something unique every day.”

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