

INSIDE THE MAKINGS OF THE "WORLD'S MOST FOCAL SELFIE STUDIO"

# COMMERCIAL

## Construction & Renovation

# On a grand scale

MGM Resorts' 'innovation and differentiation' approach to hospitality excellence

### Exclusive Inside:

Studio HBA retools brand standards for two new hotels

Technology helps contractor improve efficiency

See our Flooring & Construction Firm Software reports

Official magazine of  
**2018 Commercial Construction & Renovation Summit**



Joyen M. Vakil, A.I.A.  
Sr. Vice President,  
MGM Resorts Design  
& Development

Check out also inside:





# CONTENTS

July/August • 2017

Vol. 16, No.4



## FEATURES

- 30 On a grand scale**  
MGM Resorts' 'innovation and differentiation' approach to hospitality excellence
- 112 Say cheeeese...**  
The "World's Most Focal Selfie Studio" began as a Mosaic Tile Design Contest

- 126 Operation Dilawri**  
Technology helps contractor improve efficiency and meet tight deadline on auto mall site
- 148 Reimagining**  
Studio HBA retools brand standards for two new hotels







# REIMAGINING







## Studio HBA retools brand standards for two new hotels

By Tiffany Hayden



The opportunity rarely presents itself to design two adjacent hotel projects, much less in one of the most popular beachfront locations in the country. That was the task given to Studio HBA when it was challenged to design complementary schemes for Courtyard by Marriott and Hampton Inn & Suites in Santa Monica.

As the projects were in its own backyard (Studio HBA is based just a few miles east), the team was able to provide a genuine infusion of locality in the design, forgoing typical brand standards.

With the properties' idyllic location just five blocks from the coast and Santa Monica Pier, both off of 5th and Colorado next to the new Expo Line stop, it developed a sand and beach theme that plays off one another in each hotel.

## REIMAGINING

"The designs are inspired by the excitement of a road trip to the end of Route 66 and the experiences and elements of nature that are encountered along the way," says David Dunphy, principal at Studio HBA.

"In designing both hotels in conjunction with one another, we wanted guests to feel a sense of arrival at each — that their journey to the beach has ended and their time at the beach has begun," he says. "Both designs are a complete departure from the hotels' typical brand standards as they are deeply rooted in California's west coast culture, emitting a young, vibrant, yet relaxed energy."

Courtyard by Marriott represents the beach town's bluffs and displays an earthy design, with an overarching theme of the earth's tectonic plates prevalent throughout.

As guests enter the hotel, edge-lit ceiling forms — created by Santa Monica-based Illuminate, a lighting consultancy under HBA — radiate from the front desk representing the earth's plates, increasing in height where they culminate at a "cloud-like" light fixture and a full-height media wall providing a dramatic counterpoint.

Oversized digital "Polaroids" are on display allowing for Route 66 travel imagery to be shown for a dynamic and localized art scene in the lobby area. A three-dimensional topographic map of Santa Monica serves as a focal piece behind the front desk with suspended wood planes floating above.

Sustainable earth-toned stain was applied to the concrete slabs on the floor, rather than traditional imported floor tile, adding warmth and supporting Santa Monica's environmentally-friendly mindset. Casual seating groups throughout the lobby stand out with colorful area rugs and provide guests with various areas to either work or socialize, adding transitional spaces for the hotel to use in various capacities.

### A new standard in lighting

Working hand-in-hand with Studio HBA, Illuminate created a new standard in lighting design for the Courtyard by Marriott brand. The vibrant lighting scheme and concealed LED fixtures reveal the building's rugged architectural exterior, an earthy design inspired by Santa Monica's renowned beaches.





## REIMAGINING

Elevator lobby walls are adorned with local art, silk screened onto glass featuring the iconic Santa Monica Route 66 "End of the Trail" sign and the Santa Monica Pier. A pool deck and terrace with glowing furniture and fire pits on the second floor overlooks the newly opened metro station and Pacific Ocean beyond.

The contemporary guestrooms are tailored to their locale, with a full headboard wall that features a graphic image of the Santa Monica Pier in sunset-inspired hues, setting the mood for the famed California beach vibe. Other abstract pieces include a graphic depiction of 1950's bathing beauties in the room, and a full wall covering featuring a Southern California surfer in the otherwise crisp white bathroom.

Top floor suites in the hotel are spacious and contemporary with a large balcony, generous outdoor seating, fireplaces and built-in bars overlooking the striking views of the Santa Monica Pier and beyond.

Located directly across the street from the Courtyard by Marriott sits Hampton Inn & Suites, designed to reflect the fluidity of water, representing the arrival at the Pacific Ocean.

The lobby greets guests with sweeping edge-lit ceiling planes by Illuminate, rising up from a sculptural "driftwood" front desk that flows through the entire ground floor of the hotel, linking all the areas together in a fluid motion.

Terrazzo flooring with recycled content is being used both for its sustainability and its ability to accommodate the sweeping curvilinear design of the flooring to mirror the ceiling above. The Terrazzo material allows subtle color gradations to reflect the layering effects of water as it collides with the beach.

A series of carved stone surfboards and local historic surf photos just inside the entry pay homage to Santa Monica's affinity



**"In the same way that these properties are unique to their respective brands, the environment and culture of Santa Monica are like no other place in California or beyond."**

**— Nick Albert, Principal, Illuminate**

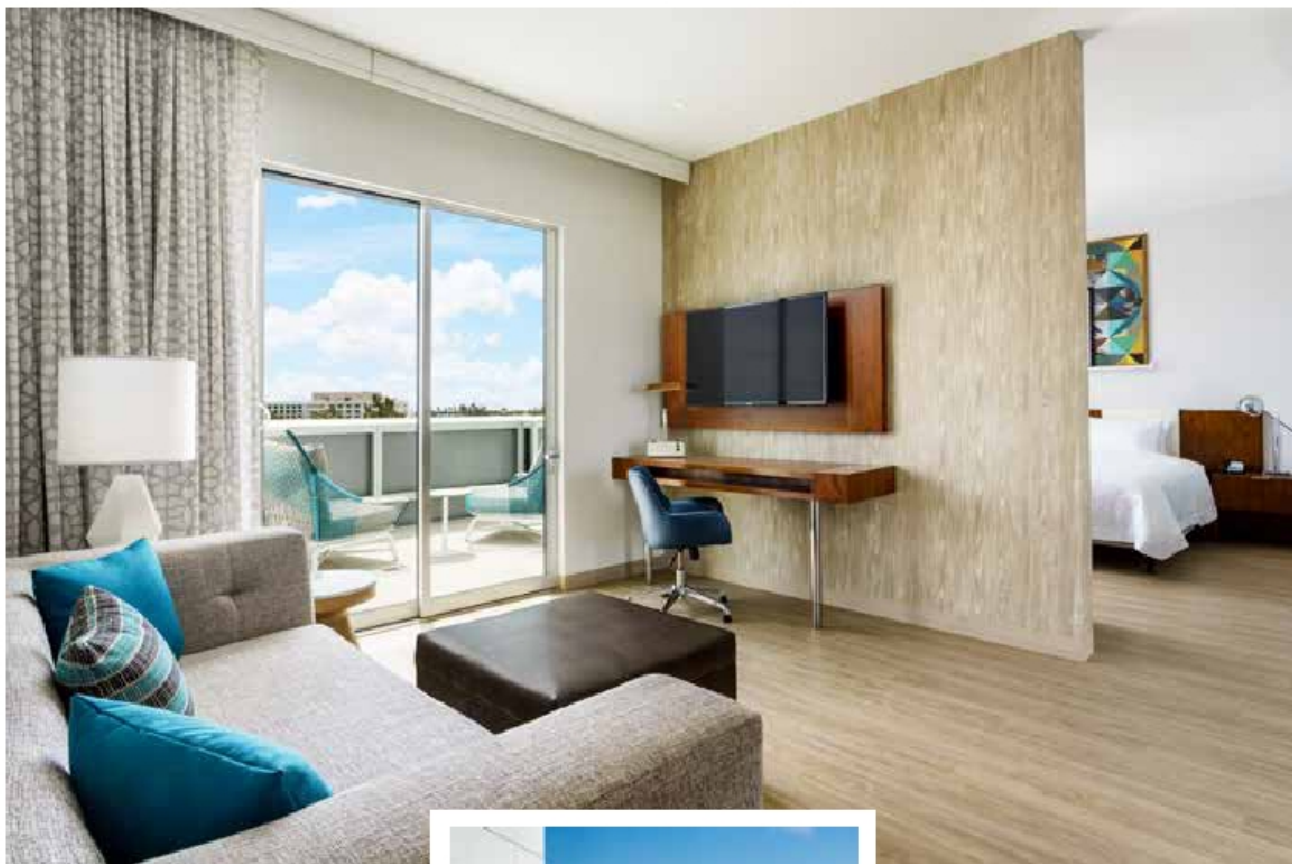
for all things aquatic. Casual seating groups were designed to appear as an assemblage collected over time, with hammock chairs suspended from the ceiling next to rope light fixtures, alongside a woven wall of ship rope to add visual texture to the lobby.

Illuminate collaborated with Studio HBA once again to develop a lighting installation that reflects the fluid movement and energy of Los Angeles. The linear LED lighting installation flows into the hotel's main lobby, taking the form of waving ceiling coves inspired by the Southern California shoreline.

High-efficiency LED and green lighting technologies were used throughout the property to enhance the design's overall narrative of a modern, beach-inspired interior, while maintaining the highest level of energy conservation.

"In the same way that these properties are unique to their respective brands, the environment and culture of Santa Monica are





like no other place in California or beyond, says Nick Albert, principal at Illuminate. "To fit that context, our lighting design had to speak to its locality not only by echoing the narrative of sand and sea inherent in the architecture and interiors, but also by eluding to the metropolitan vibrancy and activity of Santa Monica as a destination for people to live, work and play."

Similar to the Courtyard by Marriott, the elevator lobby walls are filled with graphic art, silk screened onto glass featuring colorful geometric patterns that culminate in an oversized image of a swimmer donning a bathing cap with three dimensional water drop patterns surrounding lights in the ceiling above.

A deck on the second floor features bespoke furniture elements, a large 20-foot fire pit, communal sofa and pool-length neon art depicting a series of swimmers moving across the space. Illuminate provided exterior lighting design for day and nighttime use, to maximize the use of space at the hotel.



**"The designs are inspired by the excitement of a road trip to the end of Route 66 and the experiences and elements of nature that are encountered along the way."**

— David Dunphy, principal at Studio HBA.

The contemporary guestrooms feature an accent wall of wood wall coverings at the desk area that add warmth and texture to the room, along with contemporary art pieces placed on a shelf above the upholstered headboard.

All case goods are custom with wood veneers in warm medium walnut tones and feature integral lighting elements that reflect the fluidity of design throughout. Wood and glass sliding doors into the bath area allow natural light and greater maneuvering space, giving a more open and spacious feeling.

Bathrooms exhibit an overall light and airy tone with light floors and walls and a clean, crisp white bathroom palette accented by a subtle mosaic tile wall.

Top floor suites in the hotel are spacious and contemporary featuring kitchenettes, expanded living areas, and large balconies with generous outdoor seating and views overlooking Santa Monica. **CCR**

Tiffany Hayden is a design writer in Los Angeles, California. To learn more about Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), visit [www.hba.com](http://www.hba.com).

Learn more about Illuminate at [www.illuminatehd.com](http://www.illuminatehd.com)