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Online Exclusive - M Gallery Hotel de l'Opera Hanoi

Jun 27, 2012

By Rebecca Lo; photography courtesy of Accor

For Accor's exponentially growing brand M Gallery's first foray in Vietnam, the French operator looked to **dwp** for creative direction. And for the appropriately dubbed **M Gallery de l'Opera Hanoi**, a conversion of an existing five-story French colonial building a stone's throw away from Hanoi's historic opera house, the designers didn't have to look far for inspiration.



"Given the architecture and location of the hotel, the theme of 'a night at the opera' seemed a natural direction for the design," explains Scott Whittaker, group creative director with dwp. "What is more dramatic than a night at the opera? It was an absolute pleasure to design."

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For the design, the team took "classic operatic motifs and blended them with a contemporary air, for contrasts that just sparkle like a diva on stage. We looked at the jewelry worn by an opera diva, such as a collier, and took those vibrant colors as accent tones. We played with their reflective nature on surfaces. We added dramatic lighting and Neo-Baroque furniture, as well as rich materials. For example, the guestroom experience is an opulent one, reminiscent of a private booth at the opera."



The lobby is appropriately over the top, setting the stage with a tufted emerald velvet backdrop behind the marble reception desk, floral patterned gilt screens and stuffed settees in bold fuchsia.



The drama continues into Café Lautrec, the hotel's all-day-dining restaurant to the right of the lobby. Honey-colored hardwood floors are bookended by fully glazed walls, one facing the bustling street and its opposite looking into a five-story atrium courtyard. "We wanted to create a dramatic space, where the instant impact gives a sense of pageantry," notes Whittaker about the latter. "This was to be the starting point for the operatic procession through the hotel."

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The guestrooms offer bathrooms fully finished in glittering mosaic tile. "The mosaic gives a feeling of a private spa, and the jewel tones tend to sparkle in the light," Whittaker explains. "This is an eye-catching element to the private vanity area, adding a sense of warmth and welcome."



dwp also added an indoor swimming pool flanked by a pair of sunny terraces. Adjacent to the gym, the pool's showmanship includes a waterfall backdrop, windows along three sides, and an ornate mirror on the ceiling that glows as the sun sets.



"Installing a pool into any existing building always presents a myriad of challenges," admits Whittaker. "And the challenge with any old building is often that the original intent differs from the contemporary usage. The sense of achievement in finding a solution that satisfies client, form, function, and aesthetic requirements is a gratifying

feeling.”



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